

testifies, however, that moral, if not political, antagonism to the autocrat was by no means lacking, especially in the northern provinces. They might temporarily retard the triumph of the Reformation ; they failed to eradicate heresy. The inquisitors multiplied their victims; they drove shiploads of fugitives across the North Sea to England ; they forced many to recant. They did not rehabilitate the old creed. They could not prevent an even more formidable enemy than Luther from winning proselytes. In spite of persecution Calvinism spread from France into Flanders and Hainault, and Calvinism was ere long to prove more than a match for an even more autocratic potentate, a bitterer persecutor than Charles, in the life-and-death struggle for political as well as religious liberty.

Meanwhile Anabaptist fanatics, whom persecution or religious aberration drove mad, threatened for a short time to anticipate the Calvinist revolution. The vagaries of the Brethren of the Free Spirit reappeared in the religious madness of these sectaries, disciples of David Joriszoon the Delft glassmaker, John Mathiaszoon the Haarlem baker, John Trypmaker of Amsterdam, and John Beukelzoon the tailor of Leyden. Their creed was a compound of mysticism, sensuality, communism, apocalyptic extravagance, and, like Müinzer and his followers in Germany, these crazy zealots believed in the efficacy of force in reforming Church and society in accordance with the Apocalypse. Their dangerous extravagances explain the severity of the persecution against them. Mathiaszoon and Beukelzoon sought safety in flight to the Anabaptist paradise at Münster, and from here they sent forth their emissaries to stir up revolt in Holland and Friesland in 1535. An attack on the town-house of Amsterdam was only defeated after desperate fighting. Other attempts at Oldeklooster, Kampen, Groningen, Leyden, &c., were equally sanguinary and equally misguided. The punishment of such as were taken prisoner was brutal enough. Their hearts were torn out alive and thrown in their faces, their bodies quartered and hung upon the town gates. By such ferocious methods the Anabaptist contagion was finally stamped out, and the movement only continued in the purer form of Mennonitism whose votaries —followers of Menno—while holding the doctrine of adult